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## **Insurance Committee Public Hearing**

**Thursday, February 5, 2015**

### **Connecticut Association of Health Plans Testimony in Opposition to**

#### **HB 5259 AA EXPANDING HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE FOR THE TREATMENT OF MENTAL OR NERVOUS CONDITIONS**

The Connecticut Association of Health Plans respectfully urges the Committee's opposition to HB 5259 which seeks to increase coverage for the treatment of mental or nervous conditions by requiring coverage for treatment by any health care provider an insured chooses and requiring coverage for long-term hospitalization for any such treatment.

Connecticut has taken significant steps over the last couple of years in recognition of the need to further address the behavioral, mental health and substance use needs of the state's citizenry. The Association has welcomed the opportunity to be at the table working closely with policy makers and regulators as a number of new initiatives have taken effect. Currently, we are engaged with the Office of the Health Care Advocate in bringing to fruition the vision of the Behavioral Health Clearinghouse whereby consumers can use a single point of access to learn about a range of behavioral health and substance use services that are available.

While we appreciate the intent of HB 5259, it raises a number of concerns not only about cost given its broadness in applicability, but more importantly about quality and safety in that appears to be limitless in terms of who would be permitted to provide such treatment and in what setting. The movement in the mental health community has been away from institutionalization in favor of community based care whenever possible in that community care is shown to have much more positive outcomes. We would caution the committee against moving in the direction prescribed under HB 5259, but we welcome a continued dialogue around these critical issues moving forward.

Many thanks for your consideration.